



# U.S. Army Information Technology Agency (ITA)

Strategic Communication Message, November 24, 2010, ITA, Pentagon, Washington,

## Safety Tips for a Happy Holiday Season

Did you know fires during the holiday season yearly claim the lives of more than 400 people, injure 1,650 and cause more than \$990 million in damage, according to the United States Fire Administration? With the holiday season upon us, the Information Technology Agency's Continuity of Operations office has prepared a list of recommended actions and precautions to keep you and your loved ones safe as you celebrate this joyous season.

### 1. Deep Frying Your Turkey?

You should know that the National Fire Protection Association discourages the use of outdoor gas-fueled turkey fryers that immerse the turkey in hot oil. When using the stovetop turn your pot handles inward.

### 2. Christmas Trees / Hanukkah Bush

Place the tree away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters when setting up a tree at home. Do not block doorways and place the tree out of the path of household traffic. If purchasing an artificial tree, always look for the label stating it is "Fire Resistant." Real trees may require daily watering to keep them from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.

### 3. Holiday Lights

Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they are certified for outdoor use. Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) to avoid potential shocks. Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. Ensure you check the light cords for exposed wires. When hanging indoor/outdoor lighting use appropriate ladders or step stools ensuring you are on level ground.

### 4. Decorations

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders and place candles securely where they will not be knocked over. Small decorations can also be choking hazards for small children, place them out of reach. Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. Dispose of these materials in your recycling bin; do not burn them in the fireplace. A flash fire may result because wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

### 5. Toy Safety

Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children. To prevent both burns and electrical shocks do not give young children (under age 10) a toy that plugs into an electrical outlet. Battery-operated toys are generally a better choice for this age group. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age 3 cannot have parts less than 1-1/4 inches in diameter and 2-1/4 inches long. Toys and games not meeting this regulation can pose a potential choking hazard for children under age 3. Watch out for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length as they can be a strangulation hazard for toddlers and babies.

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## 6. Happy Visiting

Create and keep laminated lists of all the important phone numbers you or a baby-sitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. A laminated list should be kept on your person and another left in a highly visible, easily accessible spot in the home. The list should include: police, fire department, doctor/pediatrician and the National Poison Control Center Helpline 1-800-222-1222 (works from anywhere in the United States). Remember always call 911 if it is an actual emergency situation. Additionally, do not forget to safeguard your password when relatives and/or friends ask to use your home computer.

## 7. Fireplaces

Open the flue before lighting any fire. Remove all greenery, branches, papers, and other decorative items from the fireplace area.

Click on the links below for more information on preparing yourself and family to respond quickly and safely in an emergency or disastrous event. You can also contact ITA COOP Program Office at ITACOO@conus.army.mil to learn more.

## Internet Sites

- American Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org/>
- FEMA [http://www.fema.gov/preparedness/community\\_prepare.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/preparedness/community_prepare.shtm)
- National Fire Protection Association <http://www.nfpa.org>
- Preparedness Planning J:\ITA ESS-P\BC DIV\COOP\2.Knowledge Base\EmergencyPreparedness\EmployeesGuide.pdf
- Disaster Supplies Kit J:\ITA ESS-P\BC DIV\COOP\2.Knowledge Base\Disaster Planning\DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.doc
- Ready Army.Gov site <http://www.acsim.army.mil/readyarmy/>

Safe and Happy Holidays to All!

Respectfully,  
ITA Continuity of Operations  
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